5/17/74

Dear Harold,

Howdy, partner! Since we last spoke I've discussed my new job with my father, and he is enthusiastic. The more I've thought about it, the more excited I've become, too. On just about every level, this is like a blessing for me, and one of the considerations, believe me, is that I can be of help to you. Before I come down I wouldlike to go over the transcripts thoroughly, and go through all my files as well. There are some older books on Nixon which I'll go through too. I expect this all to take two weeks, so perhaps I can be ready to come down by the first or second week of June.

As I anticipated, and as you might have imagined, the one thing that my father was concerned about was the money. He ~~MMK~~ seemed a little apprehensive that I was guaranteed to get the $500, and asked me if I was not taking a risk in giving up a job of which I was assured. I told him that my understanding was that the money would be in your hands as of today, so that that part of the deal was quite certain. Another point he raised was coverage of our "business" expenses, such as travel, which will probably run me at least $40, and phone bills. As I've calculated it, $500 falls just short of my living expenses here for the summer, although I do have a bank account on which I could fall back if it came to that. My father (and I) felt that an inquiry should be made as to whether funds could be provided for travel and phone.

Which leads me to ask, who is putting up this money? I'm just curious now, and the full story can wait till I'm there.

As for my "special interest" in Philadelphia, I tend to think it is not exactly what you might have suspected. Yes, it is related to my love (or "love") problem, which I would like to explain to you, for it will help you to understand and know me better.

Ever since I was old enough to be aware of such things, I have known that I am a homosexual. For a very long time it was something that I felt should be repressed. In high school and college I have had many relationships with girls, including sexual, some very close and fulfilling in certain ways. But these never fulfilled my real needs and desires. In high school I completed rejected the idea of admitting that I was gay, out of fear and because of obvious social pressure. My experiences in college changed my attitude and I grew to realize that it was possible to live openly as a homosexual and not be reduced to a degrading, promiscuous life--and also, that it was becoming more and more untenable to suppress this aspect of myself. About three months ago I "came out" (trans: come out of the closet by going public as a gay) by going to a gay dance sponsored by the gay organization at Penn. I can honestly say that this was one of the healthiest things I've ever done, and at last I felt truly honest with myself. Some of my "straight" friends already knew about me, and those who did not accepted it very well. If anything, my straight friendships are now closer because I can be more open.

As you have deduced by now, my love problem concerns a boy with whom I am now involved. As of the time I described it as a "love" problem, I did not know him that well and was not sure that I was really in love; also, there were many problems in our relationship. On my side, I'll be leaving Phila at the end of the summer, and he has many personal problems involving his roomate. Now I feel more comfortable in saying that I am in love with Richard, although I

dread the thought of leaving him in Sept. I would like to be with Richard as much as I can this summer, and I just cannot entertain the thought of living away from Phila because of that.

I am very curious as to whether this all comes as a shock to you. It has surprised some people, but (to my surprise) not many. So far the only people who know are people my age, and they accept it (even those who really fear it) because they know that I am happy. I have not yet told my parents, and I am agonizing over when to tell them. I want them to know, because I love them very much and want them to love me for what I am. But I know this will hurt them deeply, even if I can make them understand it. Right now I think I should hold off telling them, perhaps until I have spent more time establishing my gay identity, for this is a very new experience for me and I'm still evolving and changing. I had planned to discuss this with you when I was there, but I never got the chance, because the time never seemed right.

I'm sorry that I delayed writing you and Lil a thank you note for my last visit. It was a pleasure to be there and, even if I am family, I still appreciate your having me. I hope you and Lil will accept the check as a token of my and my parents' gratitude.

I've got to run, for I'm a working man now! Hope to hear from you soon, and I hope things are working out OK down there.

Best,

Howard